

**State Special Education Advisory Committee
(SSEAC)
Richmond, Virginia
July 18-20, 2007**

DRAFT MINUTES

Wednesday July 18, 2007

Executive Subcommittee Meeting

Thursday July 19, 2007

<i>Members</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Mike Behrmann	X		Susanne Conroy	x	
Mary Ann Discenza	X		Emily Dreyfus	x	
Sharon Duncan		X	Stacie Ellis	X	
Anne Fischer	X		Carol Hamilton		X
Melodie Henderson	X		David Martin	X	
Cindy Mills	X		Jacqueline Nelson	X	
Rick Richardson	X		Peter Squire	X	
Tamara Temoney	X		Carletta Wilson		X
Michael Wong		X			

<i>Department of Education Staff</i>			
Doug Cox	Pat Burgess	Cathy Pomfrey	John Eisenberg
Suzanne Creasey	Marianne Moore	Paul Raskopf	Patty Pitts
Gloria Dalton	Hunter Barnes	Anu Upadhyaya	Barbara McGonagill
Judy Douglas	Melissa Smith		
Pat Abrams			

<i>Guests</i>	
Cathy Healy (PEATC)	Pierre Ames (PEATC)
Barbara Cornicello (PEATC)	Suzanne Wolfe (PEATC)

Call to Order

Ms. Anne Fischer called the meeting to order. She asked for introductions.

Agenda

Ms. Fischer reviewed the agenda and it was noted that several items would be rearranged as necessary.

Minutes

Mr. Peter Squire moved to approve the minutes as presented. Dr. David Martin seconded. The minutes were approved as written.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Reorganization

It was recommended at the January 2007 meeting that the Autism Ad Hoc Subcommittee be disbanded. Ms. Anne Fischer distributed copies of the Sub Committee Matrix noting changes in membership appointments to the Ad Hoc Subcommittees. Ms. Mary Ann Discenza was appointed to Personnel, Ms. Stacie Ellis was appointed to Data and Reports, and Ms. Suzanne Conroy was appointed to Constituency Involvement.

Vacancies

Mr. Doug Cox reported that as of the July meeting, there are two vacancies on the committee, a parent representative from Region 4 and a person with a disability. Upcoming vacancies include parent representatives from Regions 3, 5 and 7, as well as representatives for transition, a local education director, and a local superintendent. He noted that due to resignations or terms ending, there would be a total of eight vacancies including one position eligible for reappointment before the end of the year. The Board of Education (BOE) has received nominations for seven of the eight positions. The parent representative from Region 3 remains vacant. Mr. Cox was hopeful there would be nominations for the Region 3 position by the September Board of Education meeting.

Public Comment Follow-up

Ms. Anne Fischer stated that one of the main issues presented at the public forum at the April meeting related to issues with the hiring of international teachers.

Visiting International Special Education Teachers

Ms. Patty Pitts, Assistant Superintendent for Teacher Education and Licensure, presented information about the licensing of teachers in the Visiting International Faculty Program, the proposed International License, and requirements for individuals who have foreign credentials to become licensed in Virginia. She stated that all individuals have to meet state licensing

requirements.

Transition Planning Grant

Ms. Marianne Moore, specialist for middle and secondary transition, provided members with a list of the ten LEAs who were awarded transition planning grants. These LEAs will meet with community stakeholders and assess service delivery options in their communities for students 18-22 who continue to be eligible for FAPE.

Two documents were distributed that provide directions for locating the recorded webinars on Transition to Employment and Secondary Transition Components.

Annual Report

Ms. Anne Fischer distributed and reviewed a draft first version of the annual report. She requested that each member study the report noting any additional comments on the report. She asked that reports be returned and member comments would be used to assist in making revisions. Several issues were mentioned as possibly needing to be added or adjusted. Issues included: NCLB – under Future Issues, LRE, teacher qualifications, and the state performance plan.

There was some discussion on requirements and a timeline for presenting an annual report to the Board of Education. **Ms. Emily Dreyfus moved that the state SSEAC annual report be submitted to the Board of Education (BOE) at the October meeting. Dr. Rick Richardson seconded. The motion passed.**

Break

Ad Hoc Subcommittee meetings

Ad Hoc subcommittees held brief meetings.

Dr. David Martin on behalf of the nomination committee moved that Ms. Suzanne Conroy move to the position of secretary following the resignation of Stacie Ellis. Mr. Peter Squire seconded and the motion was approved.

Public Comment

Public Comment was received from several individuals.

- Jill Schwartzman-Gushue suggested ideas for improvements to assist individuals with disabilities.
- Pierre Ames reported on PEATC's IEP Facilitator Initiative that he had shared with the committee at the April 2007 meeting.

- Loli McMahon told members about some of her family's educational concerns regarding their son and their efforts at having him included in a regular education class with supports.
- Susan Foster who is in the same county but at a different school shared many of the same concerns as Mrs. McMahon. She reported on the positive experiences of her twin daughters who have been totally included in the regular classroom since entering kindergarten.
- Barbara Cornicello provided an update on PEATC's Latino outreach program.
- Anne Fischer read a letter received from Peter and Virginia Mack which she had received too late for presentation at the April 2007 meeting. They wrote regarding their son's experiences in taking the 2006 SOL Writing Assessment under VGLA and the procedures that were followed.
- Stacie Ellis told members about her son with autism who has recently graduated with a Modified Standard Diploma. Although named an honor graduate with a number of honors, he was not granted a standard or Advanced Studies diploma. He passed all required Standards of Learning assessments with the exception of the English RLR SOL. His teachers noted that he tested well on the same materials in class.

Lunch

Mr. Doug Cox introduced Mr. John Eisenberg and asked him to provide members with an update on the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center (NIMAC).

Virginia has had to opt out of the National Instructional Materials Accessibility Center (NIMAC) due to contract issues relating to an indemnity clause provision. VDOE will continue with our initiative to build an Accessible Instructional Materials Center at George Mason University that will provide students with print disabilities access to instructional materials in large print, Braille, Electronic Text, or Audio formats. Funding has been allocated to GMU to begin this task. We will also be partnering with The Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired to assist in the production of Braille materials.

Building Code Requirements and School Facilities Guidelines

Mr. Hunter Barnes, architectural consultant in the division of Support Services summarized the difference between the Building Code, what is required by law that buildings must provide, and our proposed school building guidelines. These guidelines are design recommendations (a tool for school planners to use) that tend to exceed the building code in an effort to help a school building and site better support a school's educational program requirements.

Gifted Education Update on Identification and Services for Twice Exceptional

Mr. Cox distributed the NEA publication, The Twice Exceptional Dilemma. Dr. Barbara

McGonagill, specialist for Governor's Schools and Gifted Education, VDOE, discussed the changes that have been proposed in the revised Regulations Governing Educational for Gifted Students and the effect those changes will have on better identification and services for twice exceptional students.

The identification section of the regulations mirrors many of the best practices suggestions from the NEA document. Divisions must use multiple criteria and have the opportunity use a mixture of objective and subjective measures. The use of portfolios is increasing across the commonwealth. One of the most important things that divisions might do in the consideration of a student who is referred and has a special education assessment in his or her cumulative folder is to review the psychologist's evaluation of the student's performance on the individual assessment measure that was used in that special education identification.

Another important action that a division may take would be to ask the special education teacher to serve on the identification and placement committee. His or her information about the student would be helpful in determining whether the measures used in the initial assessment for gifted services were the most appropriate ones to use with that student.

Parents and others who are concerned that the identification of the special education student was not accurate should be encouraged to appeal the decision. Through the appeals process, the division may have the opportunity to use more appropriate measures than the standard measures used with all referred students.

Finally, the new revisions include language that requires the gifted education services for twice exceptional students to follow the expectations for modification and accommodation in the student's IEP. The revisions also require divisions to document how they are meeting the needs of identified students and parents are to receive reports based on their children's progress through those plans and goals.

A variety of questions were asked with many concerning the level of pre-service teachers' training to work with twice-exceptional students. As more of the teacher training programs incorporate the NCATE standards developed collaboratively by NAGC and TAG/CEC, pre-service teachers will be provided with specific training related to differentiated instruction for twice-exceptional students.

Ad Hoc Subcommittee Reports

Personnel – Dr. Mike Behrmann

The committee discussed the issue of foreign nationals who do not have adequate oral speaking skills. There are no standards for measuring oral communication skills and this could cause potential discrimination against all populations. The committee determined this is an issue that is best left to local employment and screening committees. They looked at other topics including the autism certificate, special education leadership, assistive technology and transition and looking at ways to encourage people to take additional training without adding new licenses.

Constituency Involvement – Mr. Peter Squire

The Virginia Board for People with Disabilities sent a letter to 2000 individuals that have been identified as being interested in special education matters. The committee is working to provide a sign-in sheet so individuals can provide their contact information to the committee but can also receive additional information. The committee also discussed establishing a timeline for sending out materials, i.e., the flyer a month ahead of time if that is adequate time.

Data and Reports – Mr. Paul Raskopf

The discussion revolved around the fact that the VDOE website has both state and school division data posted to meet the requirements of the state performance plan. Currently it's a static set of reports that is expected to evolve into a database that will be available to the public or anyone who needs to use the data.

There was some discussion regarding previous committee requests for LRE data. Mr. Raskopf stated that the department has tried to be responsive and has provided the data requested.

Ms. Anne Fischer asked if anyone wanted to attend the OSEP Leadership Conference in Washington, DC scheduled for August 8, 2007. Mr. Peter Squire volunteered to attend representing the SSEAC.

Assistant Superintendent's Report

Mr. Doug Cox provided an update on the special education regulations. He said the Attorney General's office is reviewing the regulations to assure there are no issues before submitting them to the Board of Education for first review. The current plan is to submit the regulations to the Board of Education in September.

Mr. Cox gave a brief update on the consolidation of the two state schools. They are looking at proposed renovations, new buildings and destroying buildings that are no longer useful. He discussed the logistics in setting up a regional day program at Hampton.

Mr. Cox reviewed the Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) which provides state income tax credits as an incentive for individuals and businesses that contribute directly to approved non-profit organizations designed to benefit impoverished individuals. The Department of Education will administer the Schools for Students with Disabilities Fund from which grants will be made to private schools for students with disabilities. The department will be required to establish an application process for such schools seeking grants from the Fund and will review the application and make a determination of whether to award a grant, based in part on the intended use of grant moneys by the applicant. The Fund would be funded from monetary donations for which the department would allocate the annual \$3 million in tax credits. The Board of Education would be required to establish regulations for the grants program, including regulations for procedures to allocate the \$3 million in tax credits in fiscal years in which more than \$3 million in monetary donations were made to the Fund. Mr. Cox told members that two

new positions have been created. One will be assigned to Sandra Ruffin and will work with private schools. The other position will work with Paul Raskopf and will work with the financial paperwork.

Ms. Anne Fischer wrote a letter of support as Virginia was applying for its third state improvement grant. The proposal was to continue the work Virginia has been doing.

Mr. Cox summarized activities at the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Project Directors held in Washington earlier in the week. The conference was attended by people from across the country who have a grant from OSEP. He told about the excellent reviews Virginia received on work being done. People were very impressed with Virginia's Department of Education's Training/Technical Assistance Centers (T/TAC).

Mr. Doug Cox recognized Dr. David Martin and Ms. Stacey Ellis, both of whom have resigned from the committee. He expressed his appreciation of the time they had given to the committee and presented each with certificates of recognition. Both members expressed gratitude for the time they had served on the committee and the things they had learned.

Thursday Evening - SSEAC Public Forum

Dr. Michael Behrmann presided over the Parent Forum which began at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday evening, July 19, 2007. Five parents representing four families attended, all with children in the same school division. Their issues related to least restrictive environment and the inconsistent availability of inclusive opportunities in the school division. In addition, other issues addressed included:

1. The delay of identification. One parent indicated that she had shared concerns and a desire to have her son tested beginning at Kindergarten. She sought medical assistance in 2nd grade, and at that time, her physician recommended interventions at school. The school division did not test until she demanded testing when her son was in 6th grade, at which point, he was identified due to ADD and provided with an IEP.
2. Failure in special education. A parent wanted to know how a child fails a grade if he is getting appropriate special education. Her son failed 9th and 10th grades and is now 17 years old. He enjoys sports, but is denied the opportunity to play sports when his grades are not up to a certain level. Again, she asked, how does a child fail if he is getting appropriate services?
3. One parent indicated that her child is fully included, as she wished, but she knows that there is no consistency in the county and she attributes her child's inclusive setting to her school administrator.

Dr. David Martin, Superintendent of Fauquier County Schools and a member of the SSEAC representing local school superintendents, shared his perspective that the building administrator is the person who provides the vision for services in a building. He indicated that it is important to share important information with the school principal before moving up the chain in a school division.

There was a dialogue about inclusive services between the SSEAC members present and the parents in attendance, which included interpretations of “least restrictive environment”, the role of the state agency in the implementation of LRE, and how to work with school divisions to resolve conflicts over placement issues.

Friday, July 20, 2007

Members	Present	Absent	Members	Present	Absent
Mike Behrmann	X		Susanne Conroy	X	
Mary Ann Discenza	X		Emily Dreyfus	X	
Sharon Duncan		X	Stacie Ellis	X	
Anne Fischer		X	Carol Hamilton		X
Melodie Henderson	X		David Martin	X	
Cindy Mills	X		Jacqueline Nelson	X	
Rick Richardson		X	Peter Squire	X	
Tamara Temoney	X		Carletta Wilson		X
Michael Wong		X	Pierre Ames (PEATC)	X	
Cathy Healy (PEATC)		X	Suzanne Wolfe (PEATC)	X	
Barbara Cornicello (PEATC)		X			

Department of Education Staff			
Pat Abrams	Tom Manthey	Wayne Barry	Cindy Cave
Doug Cox	Cathy Pomfrey	Susan Trulove	Melissa Smith
Suzanne Creasey	Paul Raskopf	Judy Hudgins	
Gloria Dalton			

Guests	
Pierre Ames (PEATC)	Chris Frawley
Suzanne Wolfe (PEATC)	Cathy Lynch
Melanie Sterling	

Dr. Mike Behrmann called the meeting to order in absence of the Chair, Anne Fischer.

Technical Diploma

Mr. Doug Cox told members that the 2007 General Assembly, through SB 1147 and HB 2039, directed the Board of Education to "establish the requirements for a technical diploma." This diploma "shall meet or exceed the requirements of a standard diploma and will include a

concentration in career and technical education as established in Board regulations."

The Board is now seeking recommendations from stakeholders as it begins to prepare these new requirements. He asked members for recommendations for the BOE. Recommendations included

- Keep in mind how a Technical Diploma option would help students.
- This diploma should be considered a "regular diploma" for NCLB & IDEA graduation.
- CTE technical program (or concentration) should equate/substitute for SOL End-of-Course verified and standard credits, not added on to those courses/tests.
- Program should encourage cooperative experiences and on-the-job training to count toward standard and verified credits
- Program should use data from career and transition assessments (i.e., interest interviews/surveys, aptitude measures, etc.) to advise students
- Program concentrations should include computer technology (including networking systems) as well as service profession (food service, health care, child care, landscaping, etc.) and work skills (work ethic, problem-solving, independence, teamwork, etc.). The work skills should be incorporated in the cooperative experiences and in course work.

Mr. Doug Cox and Ms. Jacquelyn Nelson will meet and draft a recommendation.

Response to Intervention Guidelines Update

Dr. Cindy Cave distributed copies of the draft guide for school divisions on "Responsive Instruction: Refining Our Work of Teaching All Children." She talked with members about the Response to Intervention (RtI) process. She recognized Wayne Barry and Susie Trulove, VDOE staff members who work with the RtI program.

Break

State Performance Plan-Annual Performance Report

Mr. Paul Raskopf presented an update on the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report. Mr. Raskopf discussed Virginia's determination letter from OSEP, including the fact that Virginia was one of nine states to be recognized as having "Met requirements under the IDEA". Information was also provided on data that has been posted on the VDOE website to meet the SPP/APR requirement to report data to the public.

Report on Instructional Support Team Initiative

Mr. Wayne Barry provided an overview of the Instructional Support Team Initiative (IST). Thirty-seven schools (from 17 school divisions) began the 2006 '07 school year with IST teams. During the year we lost six schools from Alexandria, one from Virginia Beach, and one from Pulaski. However, we have lost schools (or school divisions) in the past only to see them return (Prince William County). Three activities from last school year were highlighted: four schools joined Surry Elementary School in being Phase II validated; we contracted with the University of

Maryland to have them conduct Level Of Implementation (LOI) evaluations of each IST team; we developed a Middle School Model for IST. The presentation concluded with mention of how instrumental IST activities have been for the development of RtI activities in several instances/school divisions (Culpeper, Orange, Roanoke City, and Frederick).

Content Literacy Continuum

The State Improvement Grant Coordinator, Mr. Tom Manthey, presented an update of the activities of the Virginia State Improvement Grant (SIG) and the recent State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) award from the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP). The SIG is in the last year of activities to improve adolescent literacy. Most of the goals of the SIG have been met and additional activities have been undertaken in teacher quality to utilize all remaining SIG funds. The SPDG capitalizes on the progress of the SIG in establishing demonstration sites in the Content Literacy Continuum (CLC) and to replicate the CLC in all eight regions of Virginia. The SPDG will align the CLC initiative with Response to Intervention (RTI) as outlined by the Commonwealth of Virginia and provide a secondary model for implementing RTI focusing on adolescent literacy.

Parent Involvement Report

Ms. Judy Hudgins and Ms. Kathy Lynch (Virginia's Partnership for People with Disabilities at VCU) presented the report on the results of the parent survey for year one, including the plan for disseminating the state and local reports to each school division. A copy of the statewide report and the year one survey were distributed to the committee. Ms. Hudgins also gave the committee an update on the second year survey, including copies of the survey, the memo and flyer being used to promote the survey, and the schedule for the mailing, promotion and analysis of the survey results.

Constituency Reports

Name	Report	Comments
Mike Behrmann	Oral	GMU – new autism certificate; new special education leadership certificate to be implemented. November 16 – Students with Intellectual Disabilities Summit – 200-400 executives to be invited
Susanne Conroy	Oral	Ladies started Downs Syndrome group – interested in bringing special Olympics into the county; autism support group met
Mary Ann Discenza	Oral	Collaborative efforts 619 program/Part C office; conference in September on autism with national consultants – series of meetings for special education directors/local systems managers to talk about transition issues.
Emily Dreyfus	Oral	Questions about feasibility for state to use VGLA/VAPP. Some misinterpret what NCLB requires.
Sharon Duncan	Absent	
Stacie Ellis	Oral	Picnic; over two hundred came; local SEAC members invited people to

Name	Report	Comments
		come to meetings; guardianship and waiver issues
Anne Fisher	Absent	
Carol Hamilton	written	E-mailed comment – 1. One parent in my district is concerned the school system is attempting to waiver her daughter’s IEP. They have not been acknowledging it or following it. She is in a constant battle with them. When she reminded them of the IEP, due to the child failing in math, which is covered in her IEP, they suddenly remembered. My issue is how many other parents are faced with this? 2. Another parent is starting a fight with the principal’s office as to whether her son needs a “behavior contract”. The issues are covered in his IEP, but they want to extend that even further. She told me in the past when she agreed to a contract her son was constantly badgered by teachers reminding him of it. Her child has ADD. They chose behavior intervention methods to help him learn whether than a contract that doesn’t help but draw lines that don’t teach.
Melodie Henderson	Oral	Teachers in general – great concern – special education teachers with less training than core training
David Martin	Absent	
Cindy Mills	Oral	Time of year when teachers move; challenge to find qualified teachers
Jacqueline Nelson	None	
Rick Richardson	Absent	
Peter Squire	Oral	Youth leadership forum; possibility of having SSEAC convene during same time
Tamara Temoney	None	
Carletta Wilson	Absent	
Mike Wong	Absent	
Pierre Ames PEATC	Oral	Virginia’s parent involvement resource center.

Review of public comments

Dr. Mike Behrmann provided an overview of the public comments received by the committee.

- Review of failing VGLA score – unclear procedures
- Son was an honor graduate who failed SOLs
- Comments by teacher / advocate
- Two parents from same school division with similar situations with comments about inclusion
- PEATC presented follow-up request on IEP Facilitator Initiative

Future Agenda Items

- Refer PEATC request to Professional development – review at October 2007 meeting
- VAAP what's happening etc.; how VA will respond to modified achievement standards
- Broader idea alternatives to assessment
- Licensure regulations
- Activities on self determination
- Special education regulations
- Technical diploma
- Data update with Paul Raskopf
- Transition Mini Grants

Meeting adjourned

Future Meeting Dates and Locations

October 25-26, 2007 – Lynchburg
January 24-25, 2008 – Richmond
April 17-18, 2008 – Blacksburg
July 17-18, 2008 – Richmond or somewhere in Region III
October 23 -24, 2008 – Winchester or Warrenton
January 22-23, 2009 – Richmond
April 23-24, 2009 – Williamsburg
July 23-24, 2009 – Richmond